

REMARKS

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Examiner's indication that claims 8, 15, and 18 are directed to allowable subject matter. In addition, Applicant gratefully acknowledges the telephonic interview granted by the Examiner with Applicant's representative, Jonathan Hallman, on August 15, 2006. In that interview, the Applicant's representative pointed out that claim 1 includes the limitation of "an electroconductive coil spring received in each of said holder holes, each electroconductive spring having a natural length in an uncompressed state." Given this definition of natural length (corresponding to the uncompressed state), claim 1 further includes the limitation of "said electroconductive coil springs being installed in said holder holes such that each electroconductive coil spring extends by its natural length under a rest condition of said contact probe." In other words, each electroconductive coil spring is in its uncompressed state if the contact probe is in its rest state.

Applicant's representative stressed that such a rest state limitation is neither disclosed nor suggested by the Lightbody reference (USP 4,528,500), it being entirely silent regarding such a limitation. The Examiner responded that Lightbody did not rule out the possibility that its springs were uncompressed but that Applicant may address the issue in a written response, which follows.

The objection to the title.

A more descriptive replacement title is provided that is clearly indicative of the invention to which the claims are directed.

The objection to the drawings

Claim 12 is cancelled, thereby mooted the drawing objection.

The objection to claims 5-6, 11-14 and 16 for informalities.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite an "electroconductive contact member provided on either axial end of said coil spring." In other words, each end of the coil spring has a corresponding electroconductive contact member. Thus, claim 5 is definite because it then limits these two opposing electroconductive members for each coil spring. Similarly, claim 6 has been amended to limit "only one of said contact members for each of said coil springs" and is thus also definite.

As discussed, for example, on page 8, lines 4-10, a flange portion 9b may be formed at the base of needle member 9 (one of the electroconductive contact members). Thus, claim 11 has support for limiting the flange portion to be "adjacent the first electroconductive member" to show the interrelation. Because claims 12 and 16 are cancelled, their objections are mooted.

The rejection of claims 1-4, 11, 14, and 19 as being anticipated by Lightbody (USP 4,528,500).

As discussed above, Applicant has provided a contact probe in which, contrary to the conventional practice, the coil springs are in an uncompressed state if the contact probe is in a rest state (not contacting any integrated circuit to be tested by the contact probe). Lightbody is entirely silent regarding such a limitation, which has proven to be very advantageous as pad density is increased in modern electronic devices because the spring force from a large number of coil springs will tend to mechanically stress a conventional contact probe adapted for such pad density. Moreover, making the contact probe more robust (thicker) is not an option if the test frequency is high because the electrical length of the coil springs must be minimized in such situations.

Because Lightbody is entirely silent regarding the advantageous solution that Applicant has discovered, Lightbody would have to inherently disclose or suggest such a solution to support the current rejection. In that regard, Applicant readily agrees with the Examiner that Lightbody (being silent on the issue) does not rule out the possibility that its coil springs were uncompressed in the rest state, despite such a practice being contrary to convention. However, such a reliance on Lightbody would be misplaced under, for example, MPEP §§2112, Section IV, which expressly notes that to establish inherency, the extrinsic evidence "must make clear that the missing descriptive matter [in this matter, the disclosure of uncompressed coil springs] is necessarily present in the thing described in the reference." (emphasis added). Moreover, the same MPEP section further stresses that "the mere fact that a certain thing may result from a given set of circumstances is not sufficient."

Here, contrary to MPEP §§2112, Section IV there has been no showing of a "basis in fact and/or technical reasoning to reasonably support the determination that the allegedly inherent characteristic necessarily flows from the teachings of the applied prior art." (emphasis in original). Because there is no inherent disclosure or suggestion of uncompressed coil springs in contact probe rest state in Lightbody, claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-9 are

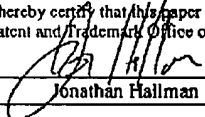
allowable over this reference. Claim 10 includes an analogous limitation of "such that each electroconductive coil spring extends its natural length if no load is applied to the coil" so that this claim and its dependent claims 11-19 are also allowable over Lightbody for at least the same reasons.

The rejection of claim 9 and 17 as being unpatentable over Bross (USP 5,225,777)

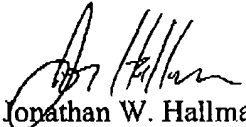
Bross adds nothing further to Lightbody with regard to the uncompressed limitations discussed above. Thus, claims 9 and 17 are allowable over both these references, either alone or in combination.

CONCLUSION

If the Examiner has any questions or concerns, a telephone call to the undersigned at (949) 752-7040 is welcomed and encouraged.

Certification of Facsimile Transmission	
I hereby certify that this paper is being facsimile transmitted to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on the date shown below.	
 Jonathan Hallman	January 29, 2007 Date of Signature

Respectfully submitted,

  
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